

They say he bore a pleasant show,
But sure his heart was sad.
For who can pleasant be, and rest,
That lives in fear and dread;
And having life suspected, doth
It still suspected lead.⁷

Two days after, Powhatan, having disguised himself in the most faithful manner he could, caused Captain Smith to be brought forth to a great house in the woods and there upon a mat by the fire to be left alone. Not long after, from behind a mat that divided the house, was made the most doleful noise he ever heard; then Powhatan more like a devil than a man, with some two hundred more as black as himself, came unto him and told him how they were friends, and presently he should go to Jamestown to send him two gift of guns and a grindstone for which he would give him the country of Capahowasic and forever esteem him as his son Nantaquoud.⁸

So to Jamestown with twelve guides Powhatan sent him. That night they quartered in the woods; he still expecting (as he had done all this long time of his imprisonment) every hour to be put to one death or other, for all their feasting. But almighty God (by His divine providence) had mollified the hearts of those stern barbarians with compassion. The next morning betimes they came to the fort, where Smith having used the savages with what kindness he could, he showed Rawhunt, Powhatan's trusty servant, two demiculverins and a millstone to carry [to] Powhatan; they found them somewhat too heavy, but when they did see him discharge them, being laded with stones among the boughs of a great tree loaded with icicles, the ice and branches came so tumbling down that the poor savages ran away half dead with fear. But at last we regained some conference with them and gave them Slattery and sent to Powhatan, his women, and children such presents as give them ill general full content.

Now in Jamestown they were all in combustion, the strongest preparing once more to run away with the pinnace, which, with the help of his life, with saker falcon¹ and musket shot, Smith forced now the third time to stay or sink.

Some, no better than they should be, had plotted with the President the next day to have him put to death by the Levitical law.² For, he lives (freed, inson and Emyr) pretending the fault was his that had led them to their ends; but he quickly took such order with such lawyers that he laid them by the heels till he sent some of them prisoners for England.

Now every once in four or five days, Pocahontas with her attendants brought him so much provision thataved many of their lives, that else for all this had starved with hunger.

Thus from numb death our good God sent relief,
The sweet assuager of all other grief.³

7. Derived from a translation of Euripides' Iby
Folly by.
8. I.e. Powhatan would esteem him a worthy child
own son Nantaquoud. Capahowasic was the
York River near where Smith was held prisoner.
9. ~~King of the~~

2. "And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to
death" (Leviticus 24:17).
3. Apparently the first line of Smith's own based on
Folly by, but the second line borrowed directly from
Folly by's translation from a quotation of Euripides
found in Plutarch.

His relation of the plenty he had seen, especially at Werowocomoco, and of the state and bounty of Powhatan (which till that time was unknown), so revived their dead spirits (especially the love of Pocahontas) as all men's fear was abandoned.

Thus you may see what difficulties still crossed any good endeavor, and the good success of the business being thus oft brought to the very period of destruction; yet you see by what strange means God hath still delivered it.

* * *

John Smith

(1580-1631)

→ explorer and founder of first permanent
English settlement in North America,
Jamestown.

→ In 1606, Smith became involved with
plans to colonize Virginia. He wrote this
piece in 1616.

START HERE

From A Description of New England¹

Who can desire more content, that hath small means; or but only his merit to advance his fortune, than to tread, and plant that ground he hath purchased by the hazard of his life? If he have but the taste of virtue, and magnanimity,² what to such a mind can be more pleasant, than planting and building a foundation for his posterity, got from the rude earth, by God's blessing and his own industry, without prejudice³ to any? If he have any grain of faith or zeal.

4. I.e. the evident affection of Pocahontas for Smith and the English was instrumental in reviving the colonists' spirits.
5. Pages.
6. Smith was not requested to write the whole *General History* by the Virginia Company, so it is not clear what his reference is here. Possibly the discourse to which he refers is the brief summary of recommendations for the "reformation" of Virginia that ends the *Fourth Book* and that he drew up at the request of the

ma 40h.
7. I.e. anonymous or "fictive" narratives.
8. Approved, proven.
9. Who is he has been a burden to nobody.
1. The text is derived from *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith*, edited by Philip L. Barbour (1986).
2. Greatness of spirit.
3. Harm.

①

in religion, what can he do less hurtful to any; or more agreeable to God, than to seek to convert those poor savages to know Christ, and humanity, whose labors with discretion will triple requite thy charge and pains? What so truly suits with honor and honesty, as the discovering things unknown? erecting townes, peopling countries, informing the ignorant, reforming things unjust, teaching virtue; and gain[ing] to our native mother country a kingdom to attend her; find[ing] employment for those that are idle, because they know not what to do: so far from wronging any, as to cause posterity to remember thee; and remembering thee, ever honor that remembrance with praise?

Then, who would live at home idly (or think in himself any worth to live) only to eat, drink, and sleep, and so die? Or by consuming that carelessly, [which] his friends got worthily? Or by using that miserably, [which] main- tained virtue honestly? Or, for being descended nobly, pine with the vain want of great kindred, in penury? Or (to maintain a silly show of bravery) toil out thy heart, soul, and time, basely, by shifts, tricks, cards, and dice? Or by relating news of others' actions, shark here or there for a dinner, or supper; deceive thy friends; by fair promises, and dissimulation, in borrowing where thou never intendest to pay; offend the laws, surfeit with excess, burden thy country, abuse thyself, despair in want, and then cozen thy kindred, yea even thine own brother, and wish thy parents' death (I will, not say damnation) to have their estates? though thou seest what honors, and rewards, the world yet hath for them will seek them and worthily deserve them.

* * *

Let this move you to embrace employment; for those whose educations, spirits, and judgments, want but your purses; not only to prevent such accustomed dangers, but also to gain more thereby than you have. And you fathers that are either so foolishly fond, or so miserably covetous, or so wilfully ignorant, or so negligently careless, as that you will rather maintain your children in idle wantonness, till they grow your masters; or become so basely unkind, as they wish nothing but your deaths; so that both sorts grow dissolute: and although you would wish them anywhere to escape the gallows, and ease your cares; though they spend you here one, two, or three hundred pound a year; you would grudge to give half so much in adventure with them, to obtain an estate, which in a small time but with a little assistance of your providence, might be better than your own. But if an angel should tell you, that any place yet, unknown can afford such fortunes, you would not believe him, no more than Columbus was believed there was any such land as is now the well-known abounding America; much less such large regions as are yet unknown, as well in America, as in Africa, and Asia, and Terra Incognita, where were courses for gentlemen (and them that would be so reputed) more suiting their qualities, than begging from their Prince's generous disposition, the labors of his sub- jects, and the very marrow of his maintenance.

I have not been so ill bred, but I have tasted of plenty and pleasure, as well as want and misery; nor doth necessity yet, or occasion of discontent, force me

4. I.e., live in poverty while claiming great ancestors.
5. sponge. "Bravery," fine appearances. "Shifts".

6. Deceive. "Excess," overindulge.
7. Provision.

to these endeavors; nor am I ignorant what small thank I shall have for my pains; or that many would have the world imagine them to be of great judg- ment, that can but blemish these my designs, by their witty objections and detractions: yet (I hope) my reasons with my deeds, will so prevail with some, that I shall not want employment in these affairs, to make the most blind see his own senselessness, and incredulity; hoping that gain will make them affect that, which religion, charity, and the common good cannot. It were but a poor device in me, to deceive myself; much more the king, and state, my friends, and country, with these inducements: which, seeing his Majesty hath given permission, I wish all sorts of worthy, honest, industrious spirits, would understand; and if they desire any further satisfaction, I will do my best to give it: Not to persuade them to go only;⁹ but go with them: Not leave them there; but live with them there. I will not say, but by ill providing and undue managing, such courses may be taken, may make us miserable enough: I but if I may have the execution of what I have projected; if they want to eat, let them eat or never digest me. If I perform what I say, I desire but that reward out of the gains may suit my pains, quality, and condition. And if I abuse you with my tongue, take my head for satisfaction. If any dislike at the year's end, defraying their charge;³ by my consent they should freely return. I fear not want of company sufficient; were it but known what I know of those countries; and by the proof of that wealth I hope yearly to return, if God please to bless me from such accidents, as are beyond my power in reason to prevent: For, I am not so simple, to think, that ever any other motive than wealth, will ever erect there

a Commonwealth; or draw company from their ease and humors at home, to stay in New England to effect my purposes. And lest any should think the toil might be insupportable, though these things may be had by labor, and diligence: I assure myself there are who delight extremely in vain pleasure, that take much more pains in England, to enjoy it, than I should do here to gain wealth sufficient; and yet I think they should not have half such sweet content: for, our pleasure here is still gains; in England, changes and loss. Here nature and liberty afford us that freely, which in England we want, or it costs us dearly. What pleasure can be more, than (being tired with any occasion a- shore)⁴ in planting vines, fruits, or herbs, in contriving their own grounds, to the pleasure of their own minds, their fields, gardens, orchards, buildings, ships, and other works, etc., to recreate themselves before their own doors, in their own boats upon the sea, where man, woman and child, with a small hook and line, by angling, may take diverse sorts of excellent fish, at their pleasures? And is it not pretty sport, to pull up two pence, six pence, and twelve pence, as fast as you can haul and veer 5 a line? He is a very bad fisher [who] cannot kill in one day with his hook and line, one, two, or three hundred cods: which dressed and dried, if they be sold there for ten shillings the hundred (though in England they will give more than twenty), may not both the servant, the master, and merchant, be well content with this gain? If a man work but three days in seven, he may get more than he can spend, unless he will be excessive. Now that carpenter, mason, gardener, tailor, smith, sailor, forger, ⁶ or what other, may they not make this a pretty recreation

8. Lac.
9. Alone.

1. I.e., he won't promise that even with bad manage- ment they'll succeed.

3. I.e., once they have paid the cost of their support for the year.
4. Some casual occurrence.
5. I.e., fish.

though they fish but an hour in a day, to take more than they eat in a week: or if they will not eat it, because there is so much better choice; yet sell it, or change it, with the fishermen, or merchants, for anything they want. And what sport doth yield a more pleasing content, and less hurt or charge than angling with a hook, and crossing the sweet air from isle to isle, over the silent streams of a calm sea, wherein the most curious may find pleasure, profit, and content. Thus, though all men be not fishers: yet all men, whatsoever, may in other matters do as well. For necessity doth in these cases so rule a Commonwealth, and each in their several functions, as their labors in their qualities may be as profitable, because there is a necessary mutual use of all.

For Gentlemen, what exercise should more delight them, than ranging daily those unknown parts, using fowling and fishing, for hunting and hawking? and yet you shall see the wild hawks give you some pleasure, in seeing them stoop⁷ (six or seven after one another) an hour or two together, at the schools of fish in the fair harbors, as those ashore at a fowl; and never trouble nor torment yourselves, with watching, mewing, feeding, and attending them: nor kill horse and man with running and crying. See you not a hawk?⁸ For hunting also: the woods, lakes, and rivers, afford not only chase sufficient, for any that delights in that kind of toil, or pleasure; but such beasts to hunt, that besides the delicacy of their bodies for food, their skins are so rich, as may well recompence thy daily labor, with a captain's pay.

For laborers, if those that sow hemp, rape,⁹ turnips, parsnips, carrots, cabbage, and such like; give twenty, thirty, forty, fifty shillings yearly for an acre of ground, and meat, drink, and wages to use it, and yet grow rich: when better, or at least as good ground, may be had and cost nothing but labor; it seems strange to me, any such should there grow poor.

My purpose is not to persuade children [to go] from their parents; men from their wives; nor servants from their masters: only, such as with free consent may be spared: But that each parish, or village, in city, or country, that will but apparel their fatherless children, of thirteen or fourteen years of age, or young married people, that have small wealth to live on; here by their labor may live exceedingly well: provided always that first there be a sufficient power to command them, houses to receive them, means to defend them, and meet provisions for them; for, any place maybe overlain;¹ and it is most necessary to have a fortress (ere this grow to practice) and sufficient masters (as, carpenters, masons, fishers, fowlers, gardeners, husbandmen, sawyers, smiths, spinsters, tailors, weavers, and such like) to take ten, twelve, or twenty, or as there is occasion, for apprentices. The masters by this may quickly grow rich; these may learn their trades themselves, to do the like; to a general and an incredible benefit, for king, and country, master, and servant.

1616

7. Swoop down.

8. Smith contrasts the delight of watching wild hawks hunt their prey in rich water with the less desirable hunt for all over the countryside.

9. Rape, the rape plant.

From New England's Trials¹

Here I must entreate a little your favors to digress. They did not kill the English because they were Christians,² but for their weapons and commodities, that were rare novelties; but now they fear we may beat them out of their dens, which lions and tigers would not admit but by force. But must this be an argument for an Englishman,³ or discourage any either in Virginia or New England? No: for I have tried them both. For Virginia, I kept that country with thirty eight, and had not⁴ to eat but what we had from the savages. When I had ten men able to go abroad, our commonwealth was very strong: with such a number I ranged that unknown country, fourteen weeks: I had but eighteen to subdue them all, with which great army I stayed six weeks before their greatest king's habitations, till they had gathered together all the power they could; and yet the Dutchmen sent at a needless excessive charge did help Powhatan how to betray me.⁵

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For wronging a soldier but the value of a penny, I have caused Powhatan [to] send his own men to Jamestown to receive their punishment at my discretion. It is true in our greatest extremity they shot me, slew three of my men, and by the folly of them that fled took me prisoner; yet God made Pocahontas the king's daughter the means to deliver me: and thereby taught me to know their treacheries to preserve the rest. It was also my chance in single combat to take the king of Paspahegh⁶ prisoner, and by keeping him, [I] forced his subjects to work in chains, till I made all the country pay contribution, having little else whereon to live.

Twice in this time I was their president,⁷ and none can say in all that time I had a man slain: but for keeping them in that fear I was much blamed both there and here: yet I left 500 behind me that through their confidence in six months came most to confusion, as you may read at large in the description of Virginia.⁸ When I went first to those desperate designs, it cost me many a forgotten pound to hire men to go; and prearrangement caused more [to] run away than went. But after the ice was broken, came many brave volunteers: notwithstanding since I came from thence, the honorable Company have been humble suitors to his Majesty to get vagabonds and condemned men to go thither: nay so much seemed was the name of Virginia, some did choose to

1—The text is derived from *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith*, edited by Philip L. Barbour (1966). By "Trials" Smith means tests or experiments, not sufferings.

2—Smith here is speaking of the massacre of settlers in Virginia in March 1622, news of which reached New England sometime in May of that year. In mustering support for settlement in New England, he obviously had to take into account the dampening effect of events in Virginia.

3—i.e., such events are not strong enough to dissuade an Englishman. "Admiral," allow.

4—Nothing "with thirty eight"; i.e., he protected or secured Virginia by means of a very modest force.

5. Several "Dutch" (probably German) skilled workers had been shipped to Virginia in 1608. Sent to build a house for Powhatan, they hinted to him that they

plotting against Smith and the colony. Arrested by the English and brought back to Jamestown for execution, they were saved when a new ship arrived from England, bringing fresh supplies and important new instructions for President Smith and Virginia's government.

6—Paspahegh was the Algonquian name for the region around Jamestown. Smith took its chief, Womachopunk, prisoner in 1609. An engraving in the first edition of the *General History* shows this episode.

7—Smith was president of the Virginia council for only a single term; editors generally assume that he here means "twice during the time I was their president these things happened," although the passage may have been garbled.

8. i.e., Smith's first book, which contains a section so titled, "Confidence"; i.e., overconfidence.